

Nicaragua and the Influence of the Mosquito Indians

CAMP of the Fighters Is Within a Very Few Minutes' March of the Palace of the Nicaraguan President—Their Moral Influence Is a Big Factor and Would Probably Prevent the Present Chief Executive From Being Removed by a Set of Revolutionists—Nicaragua Able to Report Progress Toward Stability—Conservative and Liberal Groups—Railroad in the Hands of Capable Managers—Facts About the Mosquito Indians—Resources of Nicaragua.



PRESIDENT ADOLFO DIAZ OF NICARAGUA.

BY CHARLES M. PEPPER.

Nicaragua is likely to be before Congress at an early date. There is Mr. Bryan's eloquent testimony to his conversion to dollar diplomacy in the form of the loan convention which is in substance a protectorate treaty. There are also other matters, but they hinge on the convention or treaty.

Nicaragua is able to report progress toward stability. It has passed through the economic crisis of all Central America due to the European war without any upset of the government. More than four years ago President Taft, in submitting the original loan treaty, remarked that the Republic of Nicaragua was established on a firm political and constitutional basis after eleven months of civil war and after seven years of administrative chaos resulting from the illegal diversion of public property and revenue, the accumulation of debts and claims in the hands of both natives and foreigners, and the existence of ruinous and disputed concessions, in many of which foreigners were beneficiaries.

The firm basis seemed to shift at times after this message, and especially after the refusal of the United States Senate to ratify the treaty and the savage denunciation of it by several senators. Some of them were of President Taft's political faith, but the majority were of the political school of Mr. Wilson and Mr. Bryan.

Responsibility changed the views of the present national administration. The American marines, whose presence in Nicaragua had been so bitterly de-

nounced, were kept there by their former denouncers. There are only 100 of these marines. Their camp is within a very few minutes' march of the presidential palace.



A REMINISCENCE OF THE BLUEFIELDS REVOLUTION—AMERICAN MARINES IN NICARAGUA.

In Managua. On the quickstep they could get to the palace before any set of revolutionists could do much in the way of removing the present chief executive, Adolfo Diaz, and setting up some one as the new chief.

It is the moral influence of the marines that counts. Being only one hundred strong, they could not do much to quell any general disturbance, but it is well known among the factions opposed to the present administration that it would not take long to bring more marines, and that if these should be landed in force they would make a thorough work of establishing a firm basis for constitutional government as has been done in Haiti. Hence the tranquility.

Some of the Nicaraguan exiles in New Orleans and New York have threatened that if the marines are kept in Nicaragua there will be a revolt that will be the most formidable in the history of Central America. Some of the leaders who have been in Washington have made similar menacing statements, though in more guarded language. Yet while juntas may be active in New York and New Orleans and in adjoining Central American countries, the probability of more marines is about as strong a guarantee against a real revolution as could exist.

The administration of President Adolfo Diaz is in the name of the conservative party. It is the liberals who are in exile, plotting revolution, or who are in Nicaragua keeping under cover and watching their opportunity.

These party names, however, are meaningless. They merely represent different groups, the difference at present being that the conservatives are the "ins" and the liberals the "outs." The conservatives, resting as they do on the American marines, are the sup-

porters of what amounts to the protection of the United States. The liberals, being out and not likely to get in so long as the marines remain, are of course the protectors.

It is difficult to get a dispassionate testimony in regard to affairs in Nicaragua, but there is a fair degree of agreement among those who are familiar with the situation that the administration of the conservatives is a fairly good one, certainly as good as Nicaragua has had for many years. President Diaz, it is reported, leaves the administration of the conservatives to the threat of assassination and rides about openly.

The United States has no particular interest in either the conservative group or the liberal group, nor is it concerned about the different individuals who aspire to control the present group as the best that could be had in very complicated circumstances. In consequence of this course it is able to point to some actual progress toward order and stability, and some genuine improvement in the condition of the mass of the population.

The conference committee of Secretary McAdoo's American financial conference last spring reported that the present government of the Republic of Nicaragua is stable in character and is being patriotically administered with due regard for the welfare of its citizens and the upbuilding and development of the country, affording at the same time proper protection for life and property and for the investment of outside capital.

This left-handed endorsement of dollar diplomacy is justified by the progress that has been made under the protecting process of the marines and the administrative measures of the New York banking group, which put several million dollars into Nicaragua as an investment. The experience perhaps thus far has been the only profitable feature of the investment, yet under the policy of the Washington administration the investment is secure.

One of the principal agencies of progress has been the control of the customs receipts through American officials who had served in the Philippines. These are not the official representatives of the United States, but are the representatives of the bankers who lent Nicaragua money. Collector General Ham, according to the best information obtainable, has given the Nicaraguans a square deal in the collection of the customs duties. All importers have been on the same plane. While those who favored the conservatives were not pleased at the new policy, they have found it quite easy to adapt themselves to it, the more so since they know that none of their rivals is getting the best of them.

The whole population has benefited by this American administration of the customs, because the revenues, in spite of the economic crisis, have been sufficient to meet most of the urgent needs in the way of governmental expenses.

The government, it is reported, has been able to pay out \$100,000 of claims growing out of the revolutionary disturbances, of which more than \$100,000 was recognized by the mixed claims commission, and were of claims not exceeding \$100 each. The payment of these small claims reconciled very many poor persons to the administration.

The control of the railway by the banking syndicate also has been a help. When the bankers acquired 51 per cent

of the railway stock they put in some practical railway men of the United States to manage the line. This sort of management was able to do many things that Nicaraguan government administration could not do. It was able to add to the revenues by cutting down the passes. It used to be that pretty nearly everybody rode free on this government line. Once in traveling from Managua to Granada a peon and myself were the only passengers who did not have passes, though the two passenger coaches were crowded.

Not only the politicians, but the poets and versifiers also traveled free. Nicaragua, like all Latin American countries, has many poets. The place of the greatest poet of the present generation in the Spanish language, dedicated a poem to the local poet, manager whenever there was a change in the management. No Nicaraguan railway manager could afford to offend native susceptibilities and show lack of literary appreciation by refusing a free pass to the poet who dedicated a poem to him, but American railway managers, being prosaic individuals, could, and it is understood that they have done so.

But it is in the administration of the railway as a transport enterprise in the manner of handling traffic that has added most to the revenues and been patriotically administered with due regard for the welfare of its citizens and the upbuilding and development of the country, affording at the same time proper protection for life and property and for the investment of outside capital.

Numerous efforts have been made to rehabilitate the finances, and American experts have given their views as to how it should be done. The simplest way was to have the banks maintain the fixed gold reserve originally required. It is assumed that they are henceforth to maintain this reserve, which is 40 per cent. Fuller confirmation will be wanted before it can be assumed that Nicaragua actually has stable finances, but there is no doubt progress in that direction.

If any country in Central America needs political stability and economic development in order to improve the condition of the great mass of the native population it is Nicaragua. Aside from the Mosquito Indians, on the Atlantic coast, who are entirely different from the Indians of the interior, the condition of the native population is pitiable. They have been the instruments of one dictator after another, without much actual oppression, but with nothing done to improve their material and moral condition.

There are, possibly, 400,000 of them, though some guesses at the population place the number at above half a million. Their only hope lies in a decent and progressive government which may gradually develop the industry of the country and raise their human energies by enabling them to improve their own condition.

Like all the Central American countries, Nicaragua is rich in natural resources. The coffee and the cacao are of excellent quality, and in peace times have a steady market in Europe. It is not a bad thing for either Nicaragua or the United States that on account of the war the United States has been absorbing larger quantities of these Nicaraguan products.

Bananas also are one of the greatest natural assets. The development of the banana industry is almost entirely in

American hands, and is going forward about as rapidly as is desirable.

Parts of Nicaragua offer splendid pasturage for cattle, and the industry has made considerable progress. Zelaya, before he was ousted by Secretary Knox, had one of the finest ranches south of the Rio Grande. He absorbed it after the manner of Spanish-American dictators. Quite recently some experimental shipments of Nicaraguan cattle have been made to the Panama Canal Zone. They give promise of opening up a valuable market.

The mineral resources of Nicaragua, which include gold, silver and copper, are only in a crude stage of development. Their exploitation depends very largely on improving the transportation facilities.

The forest wealth of the country is principally on the Atlantic slope. There is rubber and a great variety of tropical hardwoods. This forest wealth, however, has been comparatively little exploited because of the lack of railways to the coast.

Railway construction under a stable government, and with the United States affording some sort of a guarantee, the foreign capital invested in it, will solve many of Nicaragua's economic and political problems. The United Fruit Company is doing considerable railway building in order to open up the banana territory. Its lines are mostly in a north and south direction along the Atlantic route of the pan-American railway.

The most important railway project, however, is the transcontinental one, which would put the Pacific coast and the capital at Managua in communication with Bluefields, on the Atlantic. Numerous surveys have been made for this line, and more numerous concessions have been granted, but nothing has come of them.



GROUP OF MOSQUITO INDIANS.

If the government could afford it the construction of the line to Bluefields would be in the nature of a guarantee of political stability since most of the really bloody revolutions, as distinguished from the opera bouffe disturbances, have been in that district.

Two or three syndicates with actual capital back of them are now reported

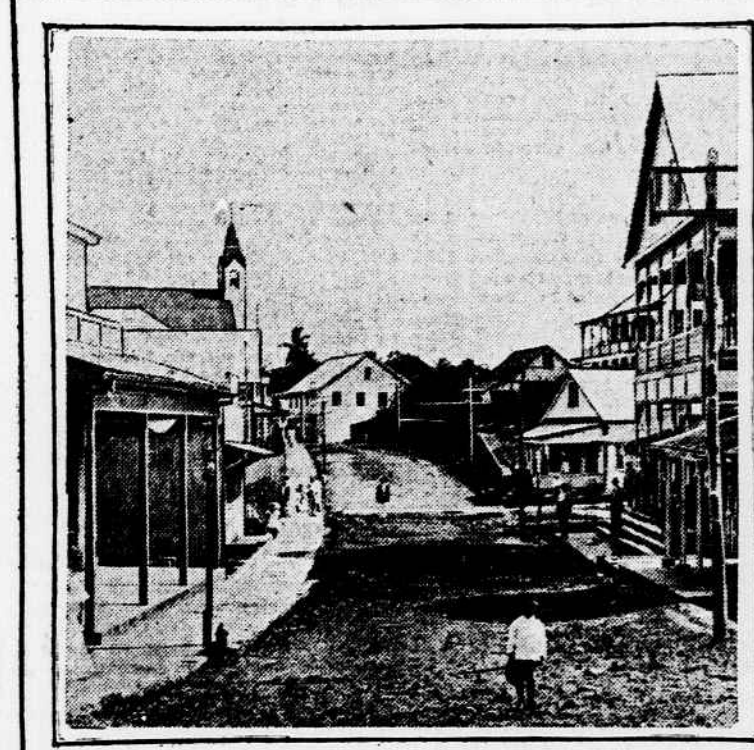
to be interesting themselves in this transcontinental railway project. If any of them is able to carry it out, a very long step will be made toward putting Nicaragua on the firm constitutional basis of which President Taft wrote so hopefully several years ago.

The approval of the Bryan proposition to pay Nicaragua \$3,000,000 for canal rights on the Bay of Fonseca and for other concessions is awaited with expectancy if not with confidence by Central America. Three million dollars would mean more to the country now than almost at any time in its history, although the financial conditions are not quite so desperate as they were two years ago.

A question sure to be raised is what the government would do with the \$3,000,000. One proposition is that it use \$1,000,000 to buy back the 51 per cent of the railway now owned by the New York bankers. That would mean, of course, that the administration of the railway would again become a foot ball of Nicaraguan politics.

The safer proposition is that the funds be used to pay off the national obligations and to provide for internal improvements. To the Nicaraguans much elasticity is given to the term "national obligations," yet with friendly suggestions from the United States it may be that foreign bondholders would be satisfied with what they get out of this sum, and that native claims would be materially reduced.

The suggestion that the United States supervise the disbursement of the money is not well received in Nicaragua, although if the conservatives remain in power the liberals probably would prefer to see them disburse it under the direction of the United States. The conservatives themselves talk about the supervision of the United States being a "renewal of Nicaraguan sovereignty." But so long as Nicaraguan sovereignty of authority rests on American marines the prospect of a serious one.



A STREET IN BLUEFIELDS.

King Peter, Old and Weak, Leads the Remnant of Serbia's Struggling Army

Special Correspondence of The Star.

PARIS, November 25, 1915.

IN the dusk of night the aged king rode up to the palace doors at Belgrade.

His white moustache froze stiff with horror as a ghostly form appeared and grasped the bridle of his horse. He knew the ghost. It was his murdered predecessor.

"Quo vadis?" demanded the specter of King Alexander Obrenovitch—"Where do you go?"

Old King Peter looked at him whom they had slain.

"I go with the army," he said, "to die for Serbia. Do you envy me, poor ghost?"

"Pass," it said, "to die for Serbia." Whence this tale of King Peter.

Around 1860 a curious family of kings in exile came tumbling into Paris.

There was the crippled son of a pig-drover, rightfully king, but carved with bowie knives so that he had deemed himself unfit to reign and passed the throne on to his younger brother.

There was the younger brother, the late king—and Persida, the late queen; their sixteen-year-old son Peter, and baby Arsene.

All had been chased from Serbia by the pork trust.

There were cousins, hangers-on and faithful Danubian retainers, such as had not been "martyred" by the first pork trust in the world. And, with them, Helene Anastasievitch, the young wife of the cripple, fit to be the heroine of this story by herself.

All had been chased from Serbia by the pork trust.

"The Serbians," she said, "had long been under the brutal Turkish yoke, yet they remained pure blood and faithful orthodox Greek Christians. All were content with their lot, living on Indian corn and pork. Even today the land is divided among 30,000 small farmers. In this peasant democracy pig drovers were natural leaders."

Some one asked where were the nobles.

"Serbia repudiated her nobles," she said, "simply. To preserve their lands and titles the nobles had turned Moslem and ceased to have the slightest influence on the mass of Christian peasants."

There was a Turkish pasha at Belgrade in 1804.

"Among the drovers, one George, surnamed Kara (Black) put himself at the head of the herd of the Koumandia, and took Belgrade in 1805. The czar, then struggling against the Turks, sustained the patriots. The pasha repudiated Kara George as a traitor, and the sublime porte recognized him. With his queen, he reigned nine years. They had two sons, born on the throne. I married the elder."

But Black George's elder son was not in luck when Helene married Kara George before, the czar had coolly "ceded" Serbia back to the sultan and transferred Kara George and his sons to Bessarabia, where they grew up as local Russian nobles. At a certain moment, old Kara could no longer stand it—a Serbian traitor ruled at Belgrade under the sultan. The czar was again

willing to aid the patriots. Kara-George gathered his partisans. Then, suddenly, he was assassinated by the pork trust, and his elder son was mutilated with bowie knives.

"The traitor was Miloch Obrenovitch, another drover," witnessed the old dame. "Miloch persuaded the Serbians to constitute a principality submissive to Turkey, but administered by Serbians. It was to get himself a place. His functions permitted him to form a trust of live pigs. Rich from speculation, he had obtained from the sultan the pashalik of Belgrade and title of hereditary prince. Miloch reigned, but he saw trouble ahead. The partisans of the Kara-Georgevitch were ready."

So rose the feud of the Kara-Georgevitch and Obrenovitch.

The partisans of Kara-George put his second son on the throne. Prince Alexander and Persida—parents of our Peter—gave the Serbians "a good reign of sixteen years."

"When deposed, in their turn, they left 12,000,000 gold in the treasury, an enormous sum for those days," said Aunt Helene. "The Serbians people have not forgotten it."

They forgot it for a long while, all the same.

"The old Miloch's son, raised a revolution. He proclaimed himself

prince, and sent the Kara-Georgevitch tumbling into Paris.

The Kara-Georgevitch conspired continually in Paris.

Luckily, they had their Aunt Helene. She bought the house in the Square du Bois, and lodged the bloodthirsty retainers over neighboring wineshops, in her attic, in her very stables. Fortunately, the king had sailed down some money.

A pistol shot echoed from Belgrade to Paris.

Prince Michael Obrenovitch was killed. The Danubian retainers grinned—in vain.

News came that, contrary to all expectations, the skoupchina had elected Miloch Obrenovitch, grandnephew of old Miloch, to be prince. The Danubian retainers drank deep, threatening, in Paris.

Miloch was the "legal" son of Ephrem Obrenovitch, his mother being one Marie Catargi, daughter of a Roman major. The envious Kara-Georgevitch declared that she had some time ceased to live with Ephrem, and certainly she died away from him, in a hotel at Wurtzburg.

Miloch, though prince of Serbia, could not obtain a princely title for his wife. One after another, a daughter of the Duc

de Nemours, the Princess Wietgenstein and others, in descending scale, refused his offers. Nathalie Gekko, daughter of a Russian government clerk ranking as colonel, saw only the princely crown and accepted him with delight when chance threw him in her way.

The Serbians liked Nathalie, but Milan was a hard one.

To raise pocket money he levied a war tax and made war with Bulgaria to justify it. Though badly beaten, he proclaimed himself king, as Miloch I.

To raise more pocket money he was said to have duplicated the Serbian constitution, not from the printing presses, signing and numbering the notes for himself, as convenient.

Nathalie saw trouble ahead. Wisely, she put money aside. Thus, with a dot of only 600,000 francs, she was able to buy the Villa Sachin at Biarritz, valued at a million and a half, and her domain in Bessarabia, worth eight millions any day.

Milan preferred to spend in Paris.

Every time he came to blow his money in the gay French capital the Danubian retainers of the Kara-Georgevitch lay for him. Princess Helene had to round them up, like a hen gathering up chicks, in corner wine shops and the news behind the Square du Bois, a bloodthirsty crew of muttering, ancient men by this time, who would fall asleep whenever they sat down.

"No bloodshed in Paris," she would warn them. "I know that the Obrenovitch swine rolls in his luxury, in easy reach. No matter, he's a guest of Paris. We are guests of Paris. You are guests of Paris. There must be no knifing at the closing of night restaurants."

Thus King Milan did not die a gaudy Parisian death, thanks to a woman. It was the more virtuous in that it became harder and harder to get a shot at Milan in Serbia. After Russia and the skoupchina had paid him six millions to abdicate in favor of his son Alexander, he returned there only once, to get more money. The pretext was his son desired Milan to "take charge of the army." The skoupchina hastened to vote him three more millions.

At the same moment "somebody" hastened to plug father and son with explosive bullets in their carriage, in the open streets of Belgrade. The shots missed. The unknown escaped. The Kara-Georgevitch declared it all a "plan" to round up their best friends.

Effectually, there was a state trial, and many of the Kara-Georgevitch were jailed, tortured and shot. Patch, his poor bones twisted and crushed, confessed all they asked him. Even the heroic Knezevitch broke down under the slow fire.

The race of Miloch seemed to be in full sap.

Alexander Obrenovitch reigned with his Queen Draga, and Queen Draga's sister was a girl who danced, after supper, at Maxim's, in Paris.

Young Peter found it a long way to Tipperary.

His father, the ex-king, always back and forth on the edge of the promised land, died on a trip to Temisvar. His mother, Persida, died on a trip to Vienna.

Peter went through St. Cyr, the French West Point, and came out Helene's, in vacation, he found pocket money and home cooking. Baby Arsene, growing up with her, prepared for St. Cyr in his turn. He helped him with his lessons, got him coaches, saw him enter, fêted his outings and celebrated his graduation.

In course of time Peter married Prin-

cess Zorka of Montenegro. After her death he settled in Geneva, but he was continually back in Paris, and his two boys, the prince crown prince and his rejected elder brother (it seems the fashion in this family to reject the elder brother) were brought up in Paris, at Aunt Helene's.

Arsene continued to lean on his aunt. As late as 1911, his address, as given in the "Tou-Paris" was No. 3 Square du Bois de Boulogne. But a change had come over the spirit of things. Paris is a wonderful place. The childless couple, Aunt Helene and her carved-up George, had finally the joy of welcoming two boys of their own, one Alexis and the other Bodjdar. As they grew up, they

proved extremely different from Peter and Arsene.

Peter and Arsene were brilliant officers, hard sports. Both distinguished themselves fighting for France.

Peter went through the Franco-Prussian war, and was decorated on the field of battle. Arsene volunteered in the spahis and Foreign Legion. As simple soldier, he was not! Arsene enjoyed the wider reputation, but Peter when he came up to Paris, had his red print in a large valise.

He took tremendous "vests" in Paris bacarat clubs.

And Arsene more so. Up and down the boulevard, he was "Kara" and "Cocoon" to a vast population. Ardent, careless, he would literally make friends with

anybody who amused him. His scrapes were innumerable. Longtime, his mail came under cover to a friend's house in the Avenue Montaigne. His telephone number was in the name of his dog. The night of Peter's nomination as king (after Alexander Obrenovitch and Draga were suppressed), the tearful enthusiasm of Palmire, the lovely proprietress of the Heider Bar, in his regard, passed into history. "I've talked familiarly with royalty!"

Their cousins (Helene's sons) were otherwise. At the moment of the coup d'etat, in 1903, Alexis (rightful heir to the throne, if you go by primogeniture) was shooting chamois in the Alps. Neither he nor Bodjdar would have anything to do with conspiring. Their father, eldest son of the original Kara-George though he was, had made them swear as little boys at his deathbed. Were he living today he would be 119 years old, and very wise. Too much blood had been spilled fighting for that throne!

Everybody knows what finally happened to the Obrenovitch.

It came suddenly, in 1903.

Alexander, son of Milan, reigning gloriously with his Draga, was assassinated with her, in their very palace, by a military conspiracy. And the Kara-Georgevitch were called to the throne.

Peter, in Geneva, had nothing to do with it, of course.

He accepted the throne, as he said, with a clear conscience. Even his gentle cousin, Bodjdar, had no pity for the Obrenovitch.

"They persecuted our parents, relatives and friends," he said. "They assassinated my grandfather. They martyred, without trial or judgment, seven of our family. One of them discovered an insignificant letter from my brother in possession of a peace-loving citizen of Belgrade. He was put against the wall and shot."

King Peter, in his old age, has grown sweeter.

He has not had a good day since he reigned.

His life is a martyrdom of explanation. He accepts it.

Never was there an old hero like this aged king, true to his people. Past seventy years of age, sickly and weak, his poor old legs all twisted and his joints swollen with rheumatism, tottering, gasping for breath in the mountain altitudes, King Peter is the soul of the army.



"QUO VADIS?" DEMANDED THE GHOST OF ALEXANDER. "WHERE DO YOU GO?" KING PETER LOOKED AT HIM WHO HAD BEEN SLAIN.

The flat stupidity of daily life galled Peter and Arsene. They had the hot, wild blood of Danubian swine herds, and life tempted them. To win or lose money gave them their fictitious excitement when their hearts cried for the real thing.

Arsene had married a Demidoff in St. Petersburg. She divorced him in five years. They had money; and, presto, it was not! Arsene enjoyed the wider reputation, but Peter when he came up to Paris, had his red print in a large valise.

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One day he sat in the trenches. An Austrian prisoner, in rags and mud, attracted his attention. Rising with pain on his lumpy joints, King Peter hobbled to the prisoner. One looked as wretched as the other.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"Yelene."

"What's your regiment?"

"The Fifty-eighth."

"What's your nationality?"

"Serbian, father of five children."

"Being a Serbian, why did you fire upon my brothers?"

"I swear, sir, I shot but once and then surrendered. I beg you to tell me, sir, who are you?"

"I am King of Serbia," answered Peter.

The prisoner fell to his knees.

With a strange look on his face, King Peter raised him, saying, "Come, eat. And the two ate and drank from the same packing box as table.

Behind a mountain battery the old king sat at dawn.

He could not sleep for his swollen knees. His finger joints were knobs. His feet fell and dripped in a rivulet before the tent door.

In the mist the ghost of Alexander Obrenovitch flickered before him.

"Quo vadis?" he inquired—"Where do you go?"

"Retreat, but hold the hills as long as may be," answered old King Peter. "Do you envy me, poor ghost?"

"Pass," it said, "to hold the hills as long as may be!"

STERLING HELLIG.